

Letter No. 63.

Monday, July 28.

Major. J. H. Massey.

6 Palestine Coy, The Buffs.

Middle East Forces.

My darling sweet Barbara-

Your letter, not numbered, posted on May 19th, arrived about two hours ago. It was a lovely letter, my darling, & said some sweet things to me, I am still flushed with pleasure because of them. You told me how much you were enjoying my letters, how they helped you & made you feel so much happier & more contented. You have no idea how much pleasure it gives me to hear you say that, because that was so very much my one idea when I was writing all those letters. I felt that you would be feeling pretty low & miserable, & would need all you could have to keep up your spirits. And it nearly drove me frantic when I kept on hearing from you that none of my letters were arriving. Thank goodness they started coming in time.

And you said how much you missed my love & kindness & looking after you. I don't know whether you calculated that remark - but there are few things you could have said to make me happier. I think you know already, that almost as much as loving you, & you loving me, I love to be appreciated by you, & anything I may do for you. I think I'm a little bit like a dog in that way, don't you, darling?

I know if you have missed having me to do things for you, I have been very sad because I have not been able to be there to do them for you. Next time, sweetest heart, when you have

our baby daughter, I will make ~~make~~ up for this
ghastly, tragic, & so unhappily inopportune parting.
I will be so marvellously loving & kind & thoughtful
& attentive that you will, perhaps, think it worth
while that I was away this time. if only because
it has made me such a perfect husband of a
pregnant wife.

I feel, my darling, that out of all this uncertainty, all
this welter of confusion & lack of knowledge of what is
going to happen - there is just one thing which is
absolutely certain & about which there is no doubt or
argument - & to which we can & must cling & which
helps us to look forward - that is the certainty
that when we come together again, there is
wonderful & assured happiness for us, no matter
what the conditions may be. I'm quite certain
that I shall love you more & more & with a
better love, that passion will be more wonderful
than ever it has been before - that we shall be
more to each other in every way & so our lives
will be more interesting & happier in every
way. I feel it is going to be so wonderful, that
I cannot put it into words. But I also feel
that you feel the same, & understand what
I mean. And I am quite certain that neither
of us will be disappointed. It is very lovely
to look forward to, my sweetheart - & I have
a quiet & very steady faith in this.
Your letter also told me about Amy's arrival &

how she pricked her own balloon within two days & brained
 you off beyond endurance. She really is the silliest
 bric imaginable - though it is difficult not to feel fond
 of her, having known her for so long now, & shared to
 some extent in her ups & downs with Vernon & Whitaker
 & so on; but, I agree, it is easier to do this from
 a distance, than to have to listen to her patronous outpourings.
 I wrote you some fairly rude things about her in a
 previous letter - & one had an uneasy feeling that
 by a coincidence the letter might arrive at the
 same time as Max, & you might be too weak to
 read it yourself & she would read it to you &
 see this. But it really would not matter. She
 would probably miss the point anyway, & her brain
 would not remember long enough. I think it is
 a "happy release" for old Kitty - perhaps some of
 his friends will have had the sense to tell him
 so. As for us living next door, or even in the
 same village, & Geoffrey being my bosom - by Christ!
 if they are permitted to see us once a month, they
 may think themselves bloody lucky. I'm afraid I shall
 not be any less intolerant when I return, probably
 more so. And I still think it is the best policy,
 because more often than not, my bad impression of
 people is confirmed when I get to know them better,
 & it is so pleasant, from time to time, to realize
 that one has been wrong. Ben-Azzi, the wise
 little man, has pointed out to me a new system which
 I seem to have fallen into, for showing my

dislike of somebody. ^{H.} Apparently when whoever it is, says
something to me, I screw up my face & lean forward
to say "what was that?" having heard perfectly well
the first time. Or did I do this before?
And so Ray has written to me twice! Nothing has
arrived yet, & I do not think it will make very
much difference to me whether it does or not. Do you
remember that first letter she wrote to me, introducing
herself after meeting Vernon in Switzerland? What a
masterpiece that was - 8 pages of letter. Any
normal person would have popped it down on one
or also telephoned. I can just imagine Vernon
working it out, & saying you get in touch with
Barbara & Mary & Massey - then when I come
home, I will come over & stay with them.

It must be pretty humiliating, though, to have all
this "you are my best friend" stuff pushed down
your throat. I sincerely hope you have not
taken her to Devon - I don't think you can
have, or it would have been in one of your p.s.
If Geoffrey Dawson has half the brain he thinks he
has, or Gordon credits him with having - Amy
will go the same way as Nora. And I wonder
how soon Vernon will suggest another trip into
adultery? I seem to be getting rather unkind
& immoral about poor old Vernon - but that episode
of his life has been rather foolish, sordid, boring,
& generally not to his credit.

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Tuesday - July 29th. At this point last night I stopped & wrote you an Airtel - also one to my ma for her birthday. I had two p.c.s. from you this morning - July 6th & 11th - really marvellous to have them, they are so comparatively up to date. You say nothing at all about yourself, but you sound very well & very happy & you tell me that Max is lovely, beautiful & very well. But I am dying & dying & asking & longing & pining to know what he looks like, & if he is showing any signs of character, intelligence or personality. I'm sure he will, being your child - his looks seem to be straight & I am just waiting for the details.

Your p.c. also mentioned about having had to pay 30/- on the underclothes & dressing gown, which seems excessive & I suppose I had better not send any more things like that. But I have not had your letter about them yet, & hope very much that we shall be rewarded by you really liking the things. I still have 3 pairs of stockings to send you, & wonder now whether to send them or not. I will ask you in an Airtel & you must reply by p.c. I rather imagine stockings will be useful, especially when winter comes again.

Wednesday July 30th. Yesterday was no good at all for writing, because we had a concert from the Jewish Welfare Committee, last night. It was not a particularly good one, but quite enjoyable. There was a girl who played the violin quite pleasantly - a fat, black sewer who screamed songs, & a pretty girl who gave recitations with considerable pep & personality, but they were all in

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Hebrew, & so I just was not there. I made my usual speech at the end, but it was all rather silly & awkward, because instead of the party lining up to take a bow, they just disappeared & did not come back - so I had to say "Thankyou very much I've all enjoyed it awfully" to nobody. Then they all came up to the mess afterwards, which is the part that annoys me because Bernstein, the Secretary man, always seems to have about four hangers on who seem to have to come too - & they always seem to be the ones who have the most to drink. However, the men enjoyed the concert very much, which is the main thing.

I have to give a performance on Friday - looking again - to this time to the Royal Navy! I was let in for this by my friend Commander (Uncle) Warburton, & I think I have told you of him. Two very special & span destroyers have just come in, & their Captains are very anxious to have their landing parties lectured on "fighting". So Uncle rang me up & asked me would I do it. I went along to see one of the Captains on his ship at 17:0 today & had some lovely Plymouth Gins, & found out what they wanted. I was shown all over the ship. I really do feel a bit bogus on these occasions, never having been within miles of anything so dangerous as fighting. And these people were in the recapture of Berbera, the evacuations of Greece & Crete, & probably many other actions. But provided they can take it, it does them some good - it is certainly good for me.

There has been quite a change in my officer position during the last few weeks, & you say you like hearing about the people I am with & so I will tell you all about it. On August 6th this Coy will have been established for 6 months - & I shall have been away from you for 10 - & on or about that date they begin changing British officers for Jewish, leaving only me, the second i/c & one British sub. By now, the new Jewish ones have arrived & the British ones have not departed & so I am 10 strong. A chap called Holo arrived last week - he is 31, has a wife & a child, & was a farmer before joining. I don't really know much about him yet, having been too busy to find out - but he seems a quiet, decent sort of bloke, & intelligent & hard working. But I don't think very much yet of his personality - but he is shy, & may come out. The other one has been a N.C.O. in my Coy & was commissioned today. I took him over as a lance corporal, promoted him Corporal & Sgt, & recommended him for his commission. He is 24, & a South African Jew - his family were Polish, he was born in the Belgian Congo, & he is now naturalised British. His name is Gerald Kalk, & he is a very pleasant, steady & reliable young man. All chaps who have earned commissions from the ranks in the other Coys, have been posted to another Coy on becoming an officer. but I decided I would prefer to keep someone I had trained myself

rather than take a chance on somebody else's judgement. I think he will do very well.

I also have a R.A. officer, attached to me for the purpose of a Court Martial, his Regt having broken up - a most forgetful shit - ten years in the ranks - in the Regular Army, & commissioned in 1939. And he is charged with borrowing money, under compulsion, from the native tailor & shoemaker. Very nice? Not content with this, he has, during the last week, borrowed £1 from Solomon, & £50 from a R.A.F. assistant Adjutant. And then, before I knew of this, having got week end leave from me, overruns his leave, & stays at the King David Hotel, Jerusalem, about £3 a day. I was very rude to him yesterday morning, & confined him to barracks until his trial comes off. Blasted nuisance - it means all the more work for me, as I had to do the summary of evidence & generally prepare all the bums. I protested vigorously at the time, for not attaching him to a R.A. Unit, but was polished off with another of these compliments about having so much more confidence in me. I wonder very much when H.D. pile all this extra work onto me, whether these compliments are real, or just to lighten the burden. However, H.D. told me that the proceedings for this case brought forth a nice thankyou from the Judge Advocate General's Dept at force H.D. who said that it was the best prepared, & therefore the easiest case with which

they had had to deal for a very long time. So now
I have two Officer trials coming up - the bloody man
& my wretched Thaurton. Thank goodness, a man's C.O.
cannot also be on the Court.

You said in your last letter darling, that you hoped all
this C.O. business would not make me forget how to
make faces & make you laugh. There is really no need
to worry my sweetheart. I shall always want to make you
laugh & feel pleased when I do - & pull faces too. I do
now into my mirror in my room. I think the
responsibility has made me a bit more impatient &
even intolerant of other people - but then my
responsibility at North's was at least as great as this,
though my powers were not so absolute as they
are now - what with Executive Directors & Trades
Unions. I always feel & I do hope I am right, that I
have changed quite a lot - for the better - that I
have cut out a certain amount of nonsense, that I am
more sensible of what is worth while. And certainly that
my love for you & appreciation of you is deeper & even
more sincere, & I hope, a great deal more understanding.
I always hope that perhaps my letters may show this.
But harking back to this C.O. stuff again, it
certainly seems a far cry from the days of Territorial
camps with Vernon & everybody. Drunk every night,
with our feet, bearing up the mess, & tremendous rockets
from Mandelberg or Zag the next day.
I went to a shop yesterday & bought for you a

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bracelet & a ring - both Yemende work. The bracelet
is an enormously heavy thing of semi silver & very
coarse & I really cannot imagine whether you will
like it or not. I think you will. It cost 13/-.. And
the ring is the same metal, quite nicely worked, &
with a big black onyx - genuine or not I do not
know, but you cannot scratch it with a file. This
cost 5/-.. This shop also had some really beautiful
rifle blouses embroidered by Yemendes - they were
brilliantly pretty, I shall definitely buy 2 or 3 to
bring back home to you. I will post off the bracelet &
ring tomorrow - Sea Mail of course.

The war does seem to be going well for us now. I saw
in the paper today, that the London Stock Exchange odds
against the war ending before Christmas, had dropped from
10-1 to 7-1 against since July 1st. These seem to be very
low odds to me, considering all things.
If only it could be true darling. I am so longing
for you, it seems so utterly impossible to remain
away from you very much longer. I really almost
feel as though I am only realising for the first time
how much I love you, & that you truly love
me - & how beautiful & wonderfully perfect you
are. And I cannot wait, to get home & begin
this new wonderful life. I'm quite convinced & sure
that my hopes are built on solid ground - I will
last forever. And I do want to see our little
Marie before he gets too big. All my deepest, dearest,
most passionate & everlasting love - my darling sweet. M.



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Mrs. H. Massey.

Carseland.

Pillory Hill.

Noss Mayo.

No. Plymouth.

